ETHNOHISTORY, ETHNICITY, AND THE PROBLEM OF FILIPINO IDENTITY *

HEIDI K. GLORIA

Ethnohistory and the Historical Understanding

All history is primarily concerned with understanding the past. The concern with the past is borne of the belief that the past is very much a part of the present and will have much to do with the future. If history has to be understood, then it matters how it is perceived, and by whom. It is imperative that its understanding be brought to the level of conscious knowledge and that those who are heirs to a common past should come to terms with what was common among them.

The past is never a single, homogeneous experience even for those who have already succeeded in becoming a nation, and certainly not for a people who have yet to forge their nationhood. The uniqueness of historical experience is the basis of Maurice Mandelbaum's historical pluralism which "consists in the view that the grand sweep of events which we call historical process is made up of an indefinitely large number of components which do not form a completely interrelated set."[1] According to this view, historical events are not necessarily related to each other even though they may have happened within the same time frame or historical period. This is reinforced by William Stern's opinion that "... the total structure of history is understood as vertically stratified; not as a single linear connection of occurrences (universal history), and also not as a set of independent historical unitary entities standing side by side (Cultural morphology)".[2] History as experience and process does away with the grand pretensions to such commonalities as are presumed in the writing of national histories. Historical pluralism as a conceptual facility enhances historical understanding in such a way so as to appreciate both mainstream and bystreams of historical experience.

* A paper read in the Seminar on Local and Oral History held in Tacloban City, December 5-6, 1985.

[1] Maurice Mandelbaum, The Problem of Historical Knowledge, (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 274

[2] Ibid., p. 287

The emphasis on the idiosyncratic and the unique is not intended to undermine the value of a truly common origin. A people who can look back to the same beginnings or roots in the past are fortunate in that the bonds of unity are to be found imbedded in the recesses of the conscious experience to begin with. A misfortune common to colonized peoples is that the once common roots come to be obscured, and even displaced by stronger because less remote experiences. When once more, the value of the older experiences resurfaces, the search for common bonds in history may be so overpowering as to sweep away as an aberration, anything that is not considered in common with the rest.

The real misfortune lies in the misunderstanding of history. When the perspective of the past becomes the prerogative of the majority who can claim a more common experience among themselves than others, then there can be no real understanding of what really happened, and to whom. There can be no fruitful forging of common ties if some are forced to give accord to what are considered common as perceived by others because they happen to be in greater numbers. In such a case, it would be useless to attempt to identify goals, values, or a common identity for one people.

The Challenge of Ethnohistory

The Filipino past is not a single, homogeneous experience. There had been a variety of historical stimuli to elicit a variety of reactions, even as the same or similar historical events produced unique responses. The totality and homogeneity of historical experience are not one and the same thing. The case for ethnohistory in Philippine historical writing is founded on one of the more critical issues in Philippine historiography today. Heretofore, Philippine history has strained to be understood in terms of what is considered historically meaningful.

Ethnohistory rests its claims on the cultural plurality of Philippine society today and the multiple cleavages that underlie its structure. Ethnohistory refers to the collective experience of a distinct group: an ethnic group. Social scientists have, in the past applied the term broadly to the past of preliterate or nonliterate societies. William Sturtevant describes three dimensions which are the main characteristics of ethnohistory: (1) concentration on the past or the present, (2) the use of written or unwritten documents, and (3) a diachronic or synchronic emphasis.[3] He defines the subject matter of ethnohistory as both historical ethnography and the historiography of nonliterate peoples. The first is the reconstruction of a synchronic, ethnographic description of the past stage of a culture. The description is usually based on written documents contemporary with that stage. The second refers to the changing form, style, interpretation, etc., of the historical literature of a people.

[3] William Sturtevant, "Anthropology, History and Ethnohistory", in James A. Clifton's Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968), pp. 451-468

Ethnohistorical studies are not necessarily limited to nonliterate societies. In these studies the written documents are used together with other evidences such as oral tradition, folk history, archaeology, etc. Historians are now beginning to appreciate the value of such additional evidences especially in cases where the written or documentary sources are scanty or strongly biased, as in the case of colonial historical literature, to be of any significance.

The growth of ethnohistory stems from many present concerns especially in developing societies. Ethnohistorical studies and methods become necessary in studies of social or cultural change where ethnohistory is understood as "essentially the welding of contemporary ethnic data to information obtained from historical documentation."[4] As communication and state control spread over once isolated communities, more and more studies resorted to ethnohistorical methods to capture the changes that have overtaken or transformed cultural traits such as cannibalism, human sacrifice, kinship systems, etc. Theories of acculturation and culture change are grounded on field ethnography and social science methods but their refinement and elaboration make use of historical means such as the documentation of the specific stages of the culture and people.

With the emergence of former colonies as independent states, considerations of national pride impelled the corrections of the biases of colonial history. For many of such nations or states, a true history is ethnohistory especially when undertaken by indigenous writers.

Ethnicity

In order to specify the scope of ethnohistory, it is necessary to define the word ethnicity. Ethnicity is still an evolving term. It used to refer to the attributes of a distinct cultural or racial group, which in turn was earlier conceived to be a "group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity which exists as a sub-group of a larger society."[5] However, the same source for this definition pointed out a shift in the direction of the older meaning of an ethnic group, as "a social group which, within a larger cultural and social system, claims or is accorded special status in terms of a complex of traits (ethnic traits) which it exhibits or is believed to exhibit . . . "[6] Social scientists have since then extended the use of the term ethnic group to refer not only to subgroups or minority groups but to all such groups which are characterized by a distinct sense of difference owing to culture and descent. Under this definition, an ethnic group need not be a minority. Depending upon its size and influence, any ethnic group can become the dominant majority.

[4] Francis A.J. Iaani, "Time and Place as Variables in Acculturation Research", American Anthropologist, Vol. 60, No. 1, Part 1 (Feb. 1958), p. 41

[5] Nathan Glazer & Daniel Moynihan, eds. Ethnicity, (Cambridge, Mass.: Howard University Press, 1975), p. 4

[6] Ibid.

More recently, there has been a tendency to equate ethnic groups with interest groups. In modern and technologically advanced societies great improvements in transportation and communication gave rise to expectations "that the kinds of factors that divide one group from another would inevitably lose their weight and sharpness . . . that there would be increasing emphasis on achievement rather than ascription, that common systems of education and communication would level differences . . . "[7] Under these circumstances the primordial or antecedent differences between groups would be expected to lose their significance. In their place, class circumstances would become the main line of division between peoples, erasing the older boundaries of tribe, language, religion, or cultural origins.

Despite such an optimistic expectancy, many have been surprised by the "persistence and salience of ethnic-based forms of social identification and conflict" and the observation that interest is pursued by ethnic groups with as much tenacity as interest groups. In the United States, while ethnic groups appeared to have lost their cultural content, the emotional attachment has remained. Glazer and Moynihan explained the phenomenon as having resulted from differences in historical experience: The group's particular historical background was regarded as the agency that played a determinative role in casting for social positions within a society.[8]

Ethnicity and Group Identity

For purposes of this study ethnicity will be equated with group identity, the most basic of which are the endowments and identification which an individual receives at birth. The primordial affinities and attachments of name, birthplace, parentage, and cultural affiliations come to one by virtue of one's birth. They shape an individual's existence even before one acquires consciousness. An ethnic group is also regarded as possessing certain physical or biological properties and is biologically self-perpetuating. Another aspect of ethnicity is that the identity is perceived not only by the group members themselves but by distinct groups of non-members or outsiders. Not only do the former feel different from others, the latter perceive them to be different. The mutual perception of distinctiveness may not exist on the same level of awareness or intensity.

The various elements of group identity differ in form as well as intensity.

[7] Ibid., p.6

[8] Ibid., p. 7

The combinations that produce known forms are non-predictable and irreducible into specific formulae because the elements relate differently with one another, viz., skin color may be the core of Black American identity but not to the Black African whose identity lies in tribal affiliation. However varied and unpredictable they may be, the functions of basic group identity are crucial to the key ingredients of an individual's personality: his sense of belongingness and self-esteem. The understanding of basic group identity is crucial to the understanding of its ethnicity.

> The new member of the group comes not only into his inheritance of the past but also into all the shaping circumstances of the present: the conditions of status that come or do not come with these legacies, his family's wealth or poverty, its relative position in the larger group to which it belongs, and the group's position relative to the other groups in its environment—all the political-social-economic circumstances that impinge on the family and the group, with all the inward and outward effects these conditions have on the shaping of the individual's personality and the making of his life. Of these the most decisive are the political conditions in which the group identity is held, the measure of power or powerlessness that is attached to it. How dominant or how dominated is the group. . ? How static or how changing is this condition, and how then, is he going to be able to see and bear himself in relation to others.[9]

These are the "holdings" that make up group identity. The extent to which they are valued or celebrated by the group has provided the substance of what is otherwise known as their collective experience or history, their mythology, art, religious beliefs, etc. How they are seen and regarded by others have provided the context upon which most of the grim confrontation between the "we" and the "they" have taken place in history.

Ethnicity And Change

Ethnicity or ethnic identity is subject to change. A group may become more or less ascriptive in its criteria for membership, more or less acculturated to the norms of another group, more or less internally cohesive and ethnocentric, etc. Group identities or boundaries, can become wider or narrower. The process of ethnic change may either be through assimilation, in which two or more groups unite thus erasing their boundaries; or differentiation, in which the boundaries are narrowed by the creation of more groups. Assimilation may either be amalgamation or fusion of two cultural groups, or incorporation in which one group assumes the cultural characteristics of another group. Differentiation is also of two kinds; division, in which one group separates into its component parts; or proliferation, whereby a new group comes into existence from a parent group.[10]

[9] Ibid., pp. 32-33

[10] Ibid., pp. 114-115

Changes in ethnic identity are obviously due to certain stimuli. Identities tend to crystallize around certain symbols or clues. Donald Horowitz suggests that there are two types of variables that influence ethnicity changes. One is contact or exposure to outsiders and the other is the size and importance of the political unit within which the group finds itself. Assimilation does not always follow acculturation, and cultural change may follow or accompany rather than precede, identity change. The relationship of cultural change to identity changes and the sequencing of the two, may be determined by the type of assimilation involved.

Since territorial boundaries define social space, Horowitz formulated a sub-theory: ". . . as identity tends to expand with an expanding context, often shaped by expanding territorial boundaries, it tends to contract with a contracting context, again often defined by contracting territorial boundaries."[11] This sub-theory may be applied extensively to a wide range of peoples with a colonial experience. Colonial administrations tended to impose political boundaries or political subdivisions that did not often coincide with ethnic differences. This was true of colonial Nigeria, East Bengal, Zambia, etc. After independence, many such former colonies underwent heightened tensions and conflicts that led to violence on the question of group boundaries and identities.

> ". . . With the precipitous partition of India in 1947, several hundred thousand lives were lost in an outbreak of communal murder that spread from Baluchistan in the west to Bengal in the east. The blood was barely dry when, with the new territorial boundaries fixed a further contraction of identity occured, and the 'provincialism' deplored by the Jinnah set in, not only in Pakistan, but also in India. Burma, granted independence six years later, slid into civil and secessionist wars from which, more than a quarter century later, it has not fully emerged; while Ceylon, also independent in 1948 took eight years to reach an upsurge of hostility between Sinhalese and Tamils, but when it came, it was exceedingly brutal."

While colonial domination lasted, all forms of ethnic identity were equally salient from the standpoint of the colonial administration whose perspective of the colonized peoples proceeded from a simple dichotomy between colonials and the colonial subjects or natives. After independence, different ethnic identities tended to compete for prominence, their area of political expression having been expanded to national, instead of local latitudes. Self-determination, as Horowitz maintains, renders the contracted context the more important one. Self-determination raises the question of the self — but it determines very little.

In advanced or highly industrialized societies the role of politics in ethnicity is further elucidated by Daniel Bell: except where minorities are openly repressed, competition between plural groups takes place largely in the political arena where competition is diffuse and lacks a specific site. Whereas economic competition is dispersed between interests and occupations, political competi-

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 136

tion is direct and tangible, and the rewards are specified through legislation or by direct allocation of jobs and privileges. Ethnic groups are pre-industrial units that with industrialization became cross-cut by economic and class interests. The upsurge of ethnicity in today's plural societies is the emergent expression chosen by disadvantaged people as a new means of seeking political redress.[13]

The powerful role of politics as a stimulus for identity change should not obscure the fact that acculturation or contact with other cultures is the broader context upon which ethnicity change could be made possible. By definition culture is the more inclusive term. To the extent that ethnicity is understood as a group identity founded on cultural and historical ties, ethnic change would mean culture change.

Ethnicity in the Philippines: Some Historic Problems

Multi-ethnicity or the problem of plural group identities is endemic in the Philippines as in the other Southeast Asian countries. As with the latter the problem was greatly compounded by a colonial experience in subjugation and the policy of divide and rule. It was this policy that led to the institutionalization of ethnic bias and prejudice. In the Philippines, the plurality syndrome is indicated by the difficulty of formulating cultural categories that would be representative of the major groups or subdivisions among the Filipino people. For purposes of national conferences or international congresses, we classify ourselves, into Christians, Muslims, and non-Christian, non-Muslim Filipinos. Among ourselves we identify the Tagalog, the Visayan, the Muslim, Ifugao, etc. For most Filipinos, the reference to one's group identity denotes no more than a hint of the existing ethnic boundaries; but for some, such as the Filipino Muslims, ethnic identity is fraught with intense emotional and cultural overtones. Much of this heightened consciousness of one's group identity stem from a historical experience of sanguinary confrontations with the Spanish and Christian colonizers so that today there are Muslim Filipinos who would object to being called Filipinos for the reason that they have never considered themselves as subjects of Spain at any time in the colonial past.

It would be fruitful, I believe, to look beyond the colonial past, for although the colonial experience dominates Philippine history it is not the whole of our historical experience. It would be heartening to remember a precolonial past, one in which the conditions of ethnicity prevailed but did not necessarily provoke the same animosities and recriminations that they do now among our people. Before colonization made its impact, the different cultural groups in the Philippines shared many things in common so that it was possible to consider commonalities rather than differences. The patterns of settlement and occupa-

[13] Ibid., p. 161

tion, as well as the artifacts of the indigenous Filipino groups were more or less similar.

The early peoples in the Philippines had proto-types among the older and aboriginal peoples of Southeast Asia. Some scholars distinguished between mainland and island Southeast Asia, or of a "Malay World" in which Malay was used as a kind of *lingua franca* sometime between the 14th-17th centuries.[14] The Malay as a predominant cultural group was prominently described in Southeast Asian literature as soon as the western colonizers knew enough about their colonial subjects to be able to make distinctions among them. Three types of Malay peoples were distinguished on the basis of occupational and settlement patterns: 1) the swidden or dry cultivators; 2) the wet or irrigated agriculturists, and 3) the sea nomads. The first group consists of upland horticulturists who farmed rice and root crops and gathered forest products, while the second were sedentary farmers who cultivated rice in lowland farms and were regarded as the most advanced of these groups. The third represents a group of people collectively known as sea nomads who, as their name suggests inhabited boat houses and foraged for their living partly from land and mostly from the sea.

This ecological model of ethnic distribution and differentiation could be generalized with few exceptions for most of the early peoples of the Philippines but what is significant is that such an ethnic classification is taken from the perspective of ethnic and communal symbiosis, or cooperation rather than conflict. Among the three, a system of intercommunal relationships was known to exist. Through trade and a specialization of economic activities, ethnic boundaries were rendered sufficiently stable. The exchange of forest products with lowland manufacturers and products from the sea is a pattern of social exchange typical in many parts of the Philippines.

Post-Colonial Ethnicity and the Levels of Conflict in Filipino Identity

Majority–Minority Conflict. The conditions of ethnic differences were later magnified by the onset of socio-cultural influences that eventually worked themselves into powerful establishments. Islam and Christianity were both potent enough to unleash a spate of socio-cultural changes that soon produced an intricate web of ethnic-based problems namely; 1) majority-minority conflict, 2) acculturation problems, and 3) class conflicts.

The coming of Islam in the 12th century may be considered as the first turning point towards cultural complexity. With the development of Islamic communities the simple indigenous forms of social life in the Philippine south

[14] Charles Robequain, Malaya, Indonesia, Borneo and the Philippines, (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1984), p. 87

were aggregated into the larger political systems known as sultanates, an institution that was no longer of the same local moorings as the *barangay*. The sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao tended to be politically as well as culturally advanced than those that had not embraced Islam and those indigenous communities that grew under its aegis acquired a distinct body of tradition and cultural characteristics that set them apart from non-Islamic ones. The first Spaniards to arrive in the Philippines in the 16th century observed that the Muslims of Sulu and Maguindanao exercised a form of hegemony over neighboring settlements in northern Borneo and the Visayas.

The entrenchment of Christianity and the Spanish colonial government in Luzon and the Visayas after the 17th century halted the advance of Islam into these areas but by then a further pluralization of cultures had taken place between the Christianized and the Hispanized Indios of Luzon-Visayas on one hand, and the Islamized—Arabicized indigenes of Sulu and Maguindanao. A cultural boundary was struck somewhere along the Mindanao sea; northwards of this sea the landscape and skyline reflect the Christian and western tradition of old churches built of massive masonry, and walled forts or Hispanized *pueblos* that served as the bastions of Spanish colonial rule. In the south all evidences of the latter disapper; the mosque takes the place of church spires and the *bantayan sa Hari* (watchtowers for Moro attacks), while the coastlines are dominated by the *vinta* or moro outrigger presenting a preview of an entirely different culture and tradition.

The Christian—Islamic divide was heightened by the succeeding American occupation and policies. The Americans succeeded where the Spaniards failed; with their superior military and organizational capability, they were able to bring colonial administration to former Muslim strongholds all over Sulu and Mindanao. The Americans however, soon realized the incompatibility of Christians and non-Christians, i.e. Muslims, under one form of political administration and subsequently introduced the idea of special governments. The Moro Province created in 1903, and the Department of Mindanao and Sulu in 1914 were consistently administered by American military governors. The Insular Government conceded little to the agitations of Christian Filipino leaders who wanted more participation and involvement in the administration of Mindanao and Sulu. While the special government obtained some supervisory control over Muslim affairs for the Insular Government, it did little to bridge the widening chasm between Muslim and Christian Filipinos. Moreover, the introduction of the idea of a special government apart from the regular form of the American government gave rise to the minority status of the Muslims and other non-Christian Filipinos vis-a-vis the Christian and westernized majority. The American policy was, in principle, derived from the policy on the Indian tribes of the United States which pursued the sequestration of the American Indians who were regarded as primitive and barbaric.

In 1920 the supervision of Muslim affairs passed to the hands of Christian-Filipino officials who headed the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes in the Department of Interior. This began a campaign of attraction among the Muslim Filipinos through various means. The Commonwealth Government in 1935

passed the Colonization Act that in effect facilitated the massive in-migration of Christian Filipinos into Mindanao ostensibly to hasten the process of integration of non-Christians into the main body politic. It was this Act which spawned problems of landgrabbing in the south. When the Republic of the Philippines took over in 1946, a full-scale majority—minority problem had already developed with all its attendant ethnic prejudices and cultural complexities.

Problems of Acculturation and Social Change. Colonization was the single major factor in Philippine and Southeast Asian history to have brought about the process of cultural diffusion on a massive scale. At the end of the 19th century, all but a few of Philippine social institutions were Hispanized and by the middle of the present century, what have been Hispanized were Americanized. With the exception of the Muslims in the south and the non-Christian hill tribes, the Philippines became the only predominantly Christian country in Southeast Asia and the most westernized among Asian nations.

The processes of acculturation and change however, were not without attrition. In addition to having produced a majority-minority problem, the westernizing influences resulted in cultural ambivalence which at times, tend dangerously towards cultural fragmentation. Where the acculturation process is transpiring at a rapid pace as among the cultural minorities, cultural changes are endangering cultural stability and therefore, the social viability of these groups. Cultural transformation itself and the extent to which it has succeeded is difficult to ascertain. It can be better gauged among the upper social strata whose commitment to the established socio-cultural order is more or less assured by access to the various units of western culture. On the whole, this commitment is at best indicated by a term derisively known as *colonial mentality*. Among the lower income classes the assimilation of western cultural influences is not easily perceptible, and in some cases social values have occasionally followed a pattern of atavism.

An indicator of acculturative malaise is the incidence of social movements in Philippine history. Armand Mauss treats social problems as social movements.[15] Where social disorganization implies the breakdown of social structure, every problem that takes place in a social context presumes the existence of a social movement and a social problem. The rise and fall of social problems are related to changes in the social structure as well as those of economic and technological conditions. Intense socioeconomic and especially religious stresses such as those produced by colonial impact are generally held to provide the preconditions for the emergence of millenarian or millenial movements so characteristic of Philippine social history. The essence of a millenarian movement is the hope of a complete and radical change in the world, at the end of a millenium or a thousand years. Eric Hobsbawn regards these movements as prepolitical movements, in that although lacking in coherent ideology and organization they

[15] Armand Mauss, Social Problems As Social Movements, (New York: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1975), pp. 26-44

nevertheless constitute a protest against the establishment.[16] Describing the revolt of Hermano Pule in 1841, Rey Ileto sees more in this revolt than the bizarre fanaticism of the movement.

> The events that culminated in the bloody revolt of 1841 was not simply a blind reaction to oppressive forces in colonial society; it was a conscious act of realizing certain possibilities of existence that the members were made conscious of through reflection upon certain mysteries and signs. Furthermore, since what we are talking about is part of the world view of a class of people with a more or less common religious experience, the connection between the events of 1840-1841 and later upheavals in the Tagalog region can be posited. Sweet has pointed out correctly the danger of making a causal connection between this revolt and the Cavite Mutiny of 1872, the Katipunan Revolt of 1895, and the Colorum revolts of the early twenties century. But certain common features of these upheavals, or the way these events were perceived, indicate that connections do exists. These lie perhaps, not in the chain of events, but in the common features through time of a consciousness that constantly seeks to define the world in its own terms.[17]

The backlash of acculturative forces in the Philippine experience has marginalized the once indigenous cultures and created a condition of instability which if unchecked, could well lead to cultural fission. It has succeeded as well, in driving cultural resistance to the subconscious level and up to now this subconscious ethnicity and regionalization of identity remains the most tenacious obstacle to a national identity.

Class Struggle. Class consciousness is of relatively recent provenance in the Philippines. However, the emergence of ideological pasturizing in Philippine politics has been steadily growing over the last ten or fifteen years. Although class conflicts based on ethnic lines are less salient than the first two problems previously mentioned, the growing prominence of class consciousness engendered by ideological and nativistic sentiments gives cause to a sensible watchfulness over its ability to influence and direct social and political events of the immediate future.

The basis of present structures in Philippine society has been laid by colonial economic policies which encouraged the concentration of developmental efforts and resources in the colonial capital in Manila and its immediate environs. The galleon trade which was the mainstay of the colonial economy up to the 19th century was an exclusive port-to-port commerce between Manila and Acapulco. The monopolistic character of the galleon trade was at the time determined by the mercantilist policies of Spain. Those who benefited, one way or the other, from the galleon trade were the Spanish and Chinese residents of Manila. Whatever profits spilled to public welfare from their private purses went

[16] Erie J. Hobsbawn, Primitive Rebels, (New York: Praeger, 1963)

[17] Rey C. Ileto, Pasyon and Revolution, (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1979), pp. 38-39

to the improvement of public works and infrastructure of the colonial capital, while racial discrimination favored the advancement of the members of Spanish civil as well as religious bureaucracy. The Chinese, whose race was discriminated against but whose role in the colonial commerce could not be dispensed with, were likewise favored. In the 19th century when the Philippines was opened to foreign trade, the first ripples of economic progress and prosperity involved the *mestizo* races; the Spanish and the Chinese *mestizos* who composed the native elite known as the *principalia*.

In the south, few of the indigenous ethnic groups made it to the *principalia*. With the exception of Cebu and Negros, socioeconomic conditions remained almost static so that no social and class distinctions were attained. Being rural was often associated with being poor, and being poor was often a matter of distance between one's home province and Manila. It happens that ethnicity in an insular and archipelagic country like the Philippines, is a matter of geography. The combination of these two factors, ethnicity and geography has largely determined the socio-economic statuses of today. Even when a wider program of economic development was undertaken by the Insular Government in the American period, the positive results were not enough to narrow the wide disparities that already existed between Manila/Luzon and the remote provinces of the archipelago.

Communal or cultural complexity in the Philippines has been assessed as a balanced plurality at least among the eight Christian groups of Filipinos "because none of them is a serious threat to the status or survival of the others."[18] The same observer adds that class is likely to supplant ethnic cleavage as the main dimension of conflict among the Filipinos. In the present century, when the traditional patterns of relationships have been greatly eroded, class tensions have in the meantime intensified. In the language of the Marxist ideology, occupation, and class interest are expected to cross-cut and weaken the grip of communal solidarities and ultimately replace them as articulators of demands and mobilizers of action.

It would be well to remember that in our history both class and ethnic consciousness have been defined by the accident of historical forces and conditions, and that their proper amelioration is now our present option. If history has any lessons to teach, one of these is that we cannot repeat and perpetuate the mistakes of the past.

[18] Milton J. Esman , "Communal Conflict in Southeast Asia," in Ethnicity, p. 414